

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T GENEVA 07017

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E.O. 11652: XDGS-1
TAGS: PARM
SUBJECT: MRV LIMITS (SALT TWO 1720)

REFS: (A) STATE 20231 (B) SALT TWO 1595

1. IN LIGHT OF REVISED DEFINITIONS OF AND LIMITATIONS ON NEW TYPES OF ICBMS AND SLBMS, DELEGATION BELIEVES THAT RATIONALE FOR INSTRUCTIONS REF (A) IS FOR MOST PART OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS. DELEGATION UNDERSTANDS THIS RATIONALE TO BE TO PRECLUDE MIRV VERIFICATION PROBLEMS WHICH COULD ARISE IN FUTURE IF NEW OR MODIFIED MRV SYSTEMS WERE DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH FROM MIRV SYSTEMS. (WE UNDERSTAND CONCERN TO BE, NOT THAT U.S. COULD NOT DETERMINE CHARACTERISTICS OF SYSTEM, BUT THAT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT SOPHISTICATED MRV SYSTEM HAD CROSSED THRESHOLD TO BE CONSIDERED MIRV.)

2. DELEGATION NOTES THAT:

A. REVISED NEW TYPES DEFINITION PERMITS SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN PAYLOADS, INCLUDING CHANGES IN DEVICES FOR
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ORIENTING AND RELEASING RVS, WITHOUT CONSIDERING AN EXISTING MISSILE TO BE A NEW TYPE. YET A PROVISION WHICH COUNTED "MODIFIED" MRV SYSTEMS ON EXISTING ICBMS AS MIRV (ASSUMING MRV LIMITATION WOULD APPLY TO MODIFIED MRV SYSTEMS ON EXISTING MISSILES, WHICH WOULD APPEAR NECESSARY TO MAKE APPROACH EFFECTIVE FOR MIRV VERIFICATION) WOULD REQUIRE COUNTING A PREVIOUSLY NON-MIRV MISSILE AS MIRV ON

BASIS OF SUCH MODIFICATION. SUCH A CONSEQUENCE, HOWEVER, WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH CONCEPT OF INCREASED FLEXIBILITY PROVIDED BY REVISED U.S. NEW TYPES DEFINITION. ALSO, SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD PRESENT DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF DEFINING "MODIFIED" MRV SYSTEMS.

B. OUTCOME OF NEW TYPES QUESTIONS OF DURATION AND EXEMPTIONS COULD REDUCE POTENTIAL OF SUCH VERIFICATION PROBLEMS FOR FUTURE TYPES OF MISSILES, BECAUSE OF RESTRICTIONS ON NUMBERS OF NEW TYPES.

3. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE, IN CONTEXT OF TREATY LIMITATION ON NEW TYPES OF ICBMS, TO TAKE CARE OF MRV PROBLEM FOR FUTURE ICBM TYPES BY PROPOSING THAT TREATY EXEMPTION BE FOR A SINGLE-RV OR A MIRVED TYPE OF ICBM, RATHER THAN NON-MIRVED OR MIRVED. SOVIETS MIGHT ACCEPT THIS, IN VIEW OF THEIR PROTOCOL PROPOSAL FOR EXEMPTION FOR SINGLE-RV TYPE OF ICBM, BUT DELEGATION BELIEVES IT UNLIKELY. IN ANY EVENT, SUCH AN OUTCOME WOULD DO NOTHING TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM FOR NEW TYPES OF SLBMS (SHOULD THERE BE NO LIMITATIONS ON THEM IN THE TREATY), OR FOR MODIFICATIONS TO EXISTING TYPES OF ICBMS AND SLBMS (AS NOTED ABOVE). FURTHER, SUCH A PROPOSAL, IF REJECTED BY SOVIETS, WOULD RESULT IN HAVING ELEVATED MRV ISSUE TO HIGHER LEVEL THAN WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH INSTRUCTIONS REF (A).

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4. IN VIEW OF FOREGOING, DELEGATION BELIEVES IT NOT IN U.S. INTEREST TO PURSUE MRV QUESTION. THEREFORE, UNLESS INSTRUCTED TO CONTRARY, DELEGATION WILL ON MAY 10 IMPLEMENT INSTRUCTION ON ICBM NEW TYPES ALTERNATIVE DESCRIBING EXEMPTION AS "MIRVED OR NON-MIRVED", AND WILL NOT PURSUE MRV QUESTION FURTHER. EARLE

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